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The position of school superintendent arose a century ago in an educational system which, although public, was administratively separate from government. Today, social changes necessitate that a superintendent be involved in areas other than school policy. While fulfilling his myriad responsibilities, he must be a leader not only in the formation of school policy, but also in the community; he must have an adequate staff, particularly for research and experimentation; and his administration must be small enough to permit consultation with teachers on administrative matters, yet large enough to ensure varied programs. Personally he must be knowledgeable, possess the temperament of a leader, and believe that the "finest ideals of American life depend on the schools for their realization." The community must support educational leadership, especially during controversy, yet be willing to replace an inept or dictatorial superintendent. (LP)

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The Unique Role of the Superintendent of Schools

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THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION

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Foreword

The concept of leadership is rarely challenged in the abstract, but the conditions in which leadership can operate may sometimes deteriorate. Where it is rejected, the leadership of an enterprise must either disappear or degenerate into autocratic control. In most enterprises, either alternative will have unfortunate—or even catastrophic—consequences.

In some American communities, the conditions necessary for educational leadership have been weakened by a pursuit of factional interests by a significant portion of the citizenry. There, the superintendency of schools has become a virtually uninhabitable position. The demise of leadership signifies the victory of forces incapable of—or uninterested in—considering the best interests of the community as a whole. The immediate victim is the superintendent; his job loses the chance for success. But in the long run, it is the quality of education that falls victim to the loss of leadership and the ascendancy of narrow views.

It is therefore fitting that, on the one hundredth anniversary of the American Association of School Administrators, the Educational Policies Commission seek to portray the role, the problems, and the potential of the superintendency of schools.

The recommendations in this publication are those of the Educational Policies Commission, a commission of the National Education Association of the United States and the American Association of School Administrators. Publication in this form does not constitute formal approval by the sponsoring associations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP 1

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT 3

The Superintendency a Century Ago 7

The Superintendency a Half-Century Ago . . . 9

THE CHALLENGE OF THE SUPERINTENDENCY TODAY 11

RECOMMENDATIONS 15

The Office of Superintendent 15

The Role of the Community 19

The Role of the Teaching Staff 21

The Qualities of the Superintendent 22

CONCLUSION 25

Educational Leadership

The superintendency of schools is one of the most crucial and perhaps most difficult public positions in American life today. The occupant of this position, more than any other single person in the community, influences the shape of public education. Thus he has a basic role in determining what will become of the young people of his community, and through them what his community and the nation will become.

It is of major importance that the job of the superintendent be done well. But the superintendency is inherently difficult and complex and is today further complicated by the great changes which are sweeping civilization. Among these changes are the growth of knowledge and of its impact on life, the population explosion, rural depopulation and urban growth, technological progress, and widespread demand for equal opportunity. Educational leadership is at the center of virtually all the current social revolutions, shaping them and being shaped by them. Its involvement is inevitable. But its chances for success are determined in large part by the intentional actions of men. That is why a community should expect its superintendent to possess outstanding qualities of leadership. But the community—the professional staff, the school board, the taxpayers, and the parents—must look at itself as well. Experience has shown repeatedly that the attitude

of the community toward educational leadership in general, and toward its school leaders in particular, has a strong impact on the superintendent's success. Therefore, a community which does not understand, desire, and support effective leadership is unlikely to find it.

The Role of the Superintendent

The superintendent has many functions, but all are focused on a single goal: to provide for the best possible education in his community. This means creating the conditions in which other people can get things done and above all in which the teacher in the classroom can perform to the best of his ability. It means also assisting the school board in the formulation of policies governing the school system. Increasingly, it implies a key role in the development of general policies affecting the life of the locality, the state, and the nation. The superintendent is a leader in the true sense, for he must be expert in bringing out the best in his community and in his staff.

Fulfillment of this role demands the performance of myriad tasks.

In the forefront of the superintendent's considerations is the instructional program of the schools. He seeks a consensus of his board, community, and staff on the goals of the schools as a basis for decisions on the program. He constantly seeks opportunities to create conditions in which the climate for learning and the work of teachers may be improved. He encourages his staff to suggest further opportunities for improvements. A typical need

is to help teachers keep abreast of advances in their respective fields. It is the superintendent's responsibility to draw together teachers, specialists, and administrators in planning for meeting this need. His community may press for the addition of driver education to the program of the high school or for foreign language instruction in the elementary school. In responding to such pressures, he must balance carefully the values of suggested activities with the demands of the current ones. Will adoption of driver education mean a weakening of the kindergarten? Will diversion of pupils' energies to a foreign language program entail less attention to competence in English? Can the study of a foreign tongue be made continuous, so that the gains of instruction in the early years will not be lost later on? Where will he find answers to such questions? Is the staff of the school system presently capable of preparing wise recommendations on such matters, or is it necessary to seek outside help, and if so, where? By providing leadership in making decisions on such matters, the superintendent influences the quality of all teaching in his school system.

The management aspects of administration, by which the school is enabled to perform its primary function of instruction, center in the superintendent's office. They constitute a vast task of making choices and stimulating action and consensus and are likely to consume much of the superintendent's time. For example, the major responsibility for the selection and appointment of the system's personnel is the superintendent's, and he has a crucial role in setting standards of professional competence. Little is more critical to the quality of education than his success in discharging these responsibilities or in finding competent deputies to help him do so.

Similarly, the school budget is prepared under the superintendent's supervision. Budget decisions call for intricate balancing of many factors, for the money which goes to one purpose is denied to another. Each decision must be preceded by a most care-

ful weighing of its impact on the quality of the schools. Each decision should benefit not only from the superintendent's views but also from those of his professional staff. The number and complexity of these decisions is apparent from the fact that the public school system is normally the largest and most expensive of all enterprises of local government. It usually serves more meals than the largest restaurant chain in any community. It has one of the largest systems of transportation. Its construction operations may exceed in scale those of any other local enterprise. Its payroll is larger and more complicated than that of most businesses in the average community. After preparing the budget proposal for this large and complex operation, the superintendent must interpret and defend it to the school board, perhaps to the city or county council, and to the community.

The solution of day-to-day problems must be placed in a meaningful framework. It is the superintendent's responsibility to encourage a permanent re-examination of the purposes of the schools in the light of changing conditions and values. He must participate in this re-examination, so that he can base his work on a view of where the schools are bound and how they can get there.

In all his work, the superintendent interacts with his staff and faces continually the necessity to understand and work within a general framework of professional and democratic relationships. The morale of the staff is one of his continuing concerns. He knows that leadership in such a framework involves more than transmitting orders from board to staff or requests from staff to board. Human relations in such a situation requires the achievement of maximum consensus as a condition of success. The superintendent can fill his leadership responsibility only by searching for teamwork and general agreement. He sees himself as a stimulator and a cooperator, not as a commander.

The art of human relations is vital also in the superintendent's relationships with the school board and the community. The

schools belong to the people and are subject to competing expectations from various groups. The superintendent's actions can rarely be based on purely instructional considerations, divorced from the views of the public. Each of two alternative school sites may be favored by mutually opposed vested interests, each of which is as much a part of the public that controls the schools as is the other. Similarly, a superintendent often faces strong pressures both for and against observance of Christmas, Good Friday, or other religious holidays through school activities. Even where school board or state policy exists on such a subject, there is likely to be much room for discretion.

Because he is an official in a democratic society, the superintendent must consider the public's views. But there are also practical reasons to do so: the people's views influence the quality of the schools. In particular, the public's willingness to pay taxes constantly influences the schools' choices, and public tolerance is an essential foundation of academic freedom.

In the necessity to reconcile conflicting points of view, the superintendent faces problems not unlike those of persons elected to political office. Indeed, his role is so central in the community, and the schools' needs so dependent on the political process for satisfaction, that he works constantly with public office holders and political party leaders at the local, state, and national levels. As a public servant, he regards it as one of his major functions to inform the public of the problems he faces and to indicate why he believes certain solutions would be in the best public interest.

As he works with professional educators and with the public, the superintendent operates within a legal framework that in many ways prescribes and circumscribes his actions. He is the agent of a school board legally empowered to set school policy. In the hiring of a teacher, he must respect state certification requirements and fair employment laws as well as his own judgment

of the candidate's competence. The length of the school day and year may be determined by state law, and the acquisition of funds from the state treasury may depend on legal definitions of daily attendance of pupils.

In short, the superintendent is teacher, politician, philosopher, student of life, public relations counselor, and businessman. All these aspects are involved in his central role of leadership.

It may be questioned whether it is wise to place such a large and diverse burden on the shoulders of a single individual. The answer provided by experience in public and business administration, and by the history of the superintendency in particular, is affirmative.

Any large-scale and complex organization requires a system of management and staff relationships. Common sense suggests that a staff must have leadership and that administration of the system must be the final responsibility of a single person. When final authority is divided, the various functions involved in administration of an enterprise inevitably develop conflict. This does not mean that administrative functions should not be shared or delegated. Indeed, one of the major functions of a leader is to draw on the knowledge and wisdom of other persons. But experience has demonstrated that final authority must be fixed on one person.

THE SUPERINTENDENCY A CENTURY AGO

The superintendency arose in the uniquely American context of an educational system that, while public, was administratively separate from all other governmental functions. From the early years of the Republic, education was thought of as the foundation of both freedom and equality. Its unique value and importance led citizens to handle it in a special way, and there was an early tendency to separate responsibility for public schools from

responsibility for other local services. While the state governments retained final constitutional authority over the schools, local school boards with locally selected members came into being all over the country.

The year 1865 saw the founding of the superintendents' national association, today called the American Association of School Administrators. At that time the office of superintendent existed in fewer than fifty cities. Its responsibilities varied widely, depending on how school boards perceived their problems. In some places the board assigned responsibility which emphasized the managerial roles of the superintendent, such as school building and business problems. In others, the board looked to the superintendent for leadership in instruction and in the training of teachers. Some cities looked to the office for very general leadership. Whatever the superintendent's functions, many members of school boards maintained direct participation in details of administration. But the problems of that era were less complex than those of today. Most children attended school for only a few years; buildings were simple; relations with the state were minimal and with the federal government, nonexistent; subjects to be taught and the materials needed to teach them were far less complex and more stable.

Even in those early years of the superintendency, there was in some places recognition of the need to fix supervisory responsibility upon some *one* person. In fact this was the argument frequently advanced for the establishment of the position. Thus in Providence, Rhode Island, a committee of the City Council in urging the appointment of a superintendent said that he

> "might carefully survey the whole ground, and understand from time to time its actual condition. It should be the duty of such an officer to have a knowledge of all the children in the city, especially those of the poorer classes. It would be within the sphere of his influence to lead the minds of par-

ents and guardians to a more comprehensive sense of their duty. It should be his province to confer with the teachers and to submit to the school committee a quarterly report exhibiting the conditions of the schools and all such matters relating to the general subject as its importance would suggest."[1]

In Washington, D.C., the superintendent was to care for "everything" to do with selecting books, maps, apparatus, improvements in school houses, furniture, methods of instruction (exhibiting the best modes), encouraging attendance of teachers and pupils, stimulating students to be more diligent, lecturing to pupils on moral and scientific subjects, and exciting a deeper interest in the cause of education in the minds of parents and citizens.[2]

THE SUPERINTENDENCY A HALF-CENTURY AGO

As more districts chose superintendents, many adhered to the principle of one-man responsibility for individual elements in the system rather than for the system as a whole. In some school systems there were five or six administrators rather than a single chief administrator. Each had charge of a different area, such as instruction, supplies, buildings, finance, health, or even of an individual subject, such as music, physical education, or art. Long and troubled experience with these fractionated systems led to their general disappearance.

Secondary schools were now common. School systems had emerged out of what were earlier merely groups of schools with widely varying standards. The political spoils system in appointment of teachers and principals had been broken in most cities.

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[1] Providence City Council Committee. *Report on the Expediency of a New Organization of the Public Schools.* Providence, R.I.: the Committee, 1837. p. 3.

[2] Board of Trustees [Education]. *Annual Report.* Washington, D.C.: the Board, 1854. pp. 7-8.

Separate school boards for various sections of the city, which were concerned only with their own area, had lost or were losing their power to a single, small, responsible board.

Superintendents of schools had contributed greatly to the development of a system in which planning was done, standards established, and evaluations made. Some attention was being given to the question of preparation of educational administrators for service in the decades ahead. The base had been established for the great expansion of educational services which was to occur in the first half of the twentieth century.

The Challenge of the Superintendency Today

A full-time superintendent now serves in virtually every district which has enough schools to justify the position. The superintendent's staff may include a number of assistants, each helping the chief administrator to discharge a different segment of his total responsibility. In sparsely populated areas, a single superintendent may serve several districts.

The cities of 1865 have become the cores of vast metropolitan concentrations, and many new populous communities have developed. While the majority of school districts are still small in population, the majority of pupils are in urban or suburban districts. Some superintendents are called upon to administer systems containing hundreds of thousands of pupils, drawn from many ethnic and economic groups in the nation. In such situations the difficulties of combining adequate flexibility with centralized administration sometimes appear insurmountable. Moreover, the metropolitan systems are beset by all the enormous problems afflicting American city life today, and their efforts to solve these problems are hindered by the administrative separation of the cities from the suburbs and surrounding areas.

Whatever the area, the superintendent's problems are more complex than at any time in the past. Virtually all children attend school, and for more years than ever before. Great technological and scientific advances, two wars, rural depopulation and urban growth, the population explosion, and widespread demand for equal opportunity are a few of the many changes that have brought the people to re-examine values and practices. As the principal agencies for realizing the nation's ideals and for developing its strength, the schools are at the center of that reappraisal.

Because they expend large sums of money and are institutions of importance to the individual, the public schools long have been prime objects of public attention. Attention has now multiplied because a larger percentage of the people participates in the giving and getting of education and because the society is more aware of the power of the enterprise. Knowledge and thought, the stuff of education, have emerged today as basic—if not *the* basic—forces of civilization. More than ever, schooling means the opportunity to mold one's future and to influence the world. The schools' role in social change and the impact of social change on the schools are so deep that educational leadership must be involved in areas other than school policy. It must be involved in the development of policies affecting the life of the total society, both in the community and beyond. Consequently, educational leadership is more difficult than ever before and more central in the total community leadership. The problems faced by the superintendent are virtually all-embracing.

Two major problems illustrate the changing nature of the superintendency. One—the determination of teachers' salaries and working conditions—is internal to the teaching profession; the other—civil rights—is a challenge to the total community.

Increasingly, teachers and their organizations are seeking and obtaining a role in the formulation of major policies, especially on personnel matters which affect the quality of their

teaching, such as salaries and conditions of service. This is a development which should be encouraged, but many questions remain unanswered about the proper role of the superintendent in such negotiations. That he should have an important role is obvious. In these crucially important situations, the superintendent must act simultaneously as agent of the school board and as leader of the professional staff. He must have the confidence of board and staff and must stimulate and facilitate the finding of a consensus which expresses the common interest of all parties in improvement of education.

The civil rights issue challenges superintendents and school boards in a very different manner. No question of recent history has so directly threatened the viability of public education or has so gravely risked making the superintendency an uninhabitable office. Closing of schools in various places in the South and boycotts in the North are only the most visible of these threats. They reflect the newness of American efforts to deal with a social decay that has festered beneath the surface for centuries. Many people are coming to look to the great healing power of the public schools in meeting a social problem of the first magnitude. They are looking to the schools for solution of a problem which no other agency has been able to solve and which has long been neglected. But they are doing so with diametrically opposed methods, and even goals, in mind. The difficulty is increased by the lack of experience in dealing with the issue, the lack of data concerning the effect of the many possible solutions, the emotional tone of the controversy, and the apparent unwillingness of some Americans to compromise or to accept a solution which will not destroy the public school system. The combination of widespread resistance to change and widespread impatience for change directly challenges the ability of school boards and superintendents to keep the schools in operation from one day to the next and to maintain the public morale and confidence essential to the long-range quality of public education.

The grave challenges confronting educational leadership, from those involving taxation or instructional problems to those involving civil rights or city size, have given rise to a wide variety of public attitudes toward the superintendency. Many citizens are with good reason satisfied or even deeply impressed with their superintendent. Many, because of indifference or ignorance, have little opinion about him. But others have looked on superintendents as unable to provide leadership in the strengthening of instructional programs or in meeting the threat to the public schools implicit in the problems of civil rights.

Some are troubled not so much by the qualities of the superintendent as by the circumstances surrounding his position. They feel that community after community has been unable or unwilling to provide the tax funds without which the schools cannot maintain momentum toward improvement. They regard some city districts as too large and some rural districts as too small for effective administration even by the most gifted of men. On civil rights they see the problem as stemming not from its inherent difficulty alone, but also from the irrationality of public responses. They fully expect controversy to swirl about so central a position in community leadership as the superintendency, but they fear that goodwill is absent from controversy in an increasing number of issues. They fear that in too many places the superintendent has become a target for indiscriminate and irresponsible pressures. They fear that influential persons and groups in the community sometimes force the superintendent to choose between his integrity—that is, his dedication to the welfare of pupils above all—and his job. Whatever his choice, the quality of education suffers. In short, they feel that the conditions in which effective leadership is possible either do not exist or are being destroyed in many school districts.

Recommendations

The need to lodge final administrative authority in a single person remains as great as ever. But the importance of that person and of his work is increasing, for the development of knowledge and talents plays an ever larger role in the life of the nation. With each passing year it becomes more important that a community have competent educational leadership. To achieve that goal the Educational Policies Commission makes the following recommendations concerning the office of superintendent, the relationship of the community and the teaching staff to that office, and the qualities of the man who occupies it.

THE OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT

The superintendent should be a leader in policy formulation. The school board decides policy, and the superintendent sees that it is carried out. But the formulation normally is and always should be a shared responsibility. Wise policies normally take time to develop, and there is normally a considerable give and take among board, superintendent, and staff with each bringing to bear information and background based on his own special competencies. This practice is entirely proper.

All decisions which are to affect an entire school system should have the benefit of the knowledge and experience of the man with the most comprehensive view of the total system. In the United States, the superintendent is uniquely qualified to provide that advice, for he is an educator by background and is concerned with all facets of school operation. In the problem of civil rights, for example, it would be folly to make school policy without considering a superintendent's view of the solution that would most help the schools or his estimate of the probable effects of alternative solutions.

The superintendent should examine the school program in all of its parts to see how each part and the whole can be improved. He should call to the attention of the board the evidence that he and members of the staff have found and that suggests new policies. He should be a planner and developer—an initiator of change—as well as a civil servant who administers in accord with established policy.

Of course, the final responsibility for policy decisions remains with the school board; the public schools must at all times be the schools of the people. But the superintendent should consider leadership his most significant responsibility, and the school board should acknowledge his leadership responsibility.

Educational leadership should henceforth be viewed as implying community leadership. In his capacity as an educational leader, the superintendent obviously has a considerable impact on the community. When he influences school construction, he influences the physical appearance of the community. When he works on the school budget, the use of the community's wealth is affected. When he deals with persons and organizations of stature in the community, he affects their thinking—and their impact—on education. Most importantly, when he influences the quality of education, he helps to shape what individuals will become and what the future society will be.

Also in his capacity as an educational leader, the superintendent wields an influence beyond his locality. He seeks to shape state and national legislation affecting the schools, in particular that legislation which determines how public moneys will be spent throughout the state or the nation. In his professional contacts, he seeks to affect—and to learn from—the thinking of educators elsewhere and the way they view their problems and objectives.

But the superintendent should be more than an educational leader. The mutual impact of school and society are today so profound that a person concerned with the institutions and processes of education must be concerned, too, with the basic strategies and policies of the American society as they are developed in the community and beyond it. He must be concerned because these strategies and policies affect the schools. He must be concerned because they affect the background which pupils and teachers bring to the schools. He must be concerned because, if he is worthy of his position, he is so deeply involved in the problems of the society, and so knowledgeable about them, that he is particularly well qualified to recommend good and feasible solutions. He must be concerned because his contacts with persons and organizations influential in the community are close enough that his thinking can carry weight.

For example, one of the most burning, divisive issues in many communities today is that arising from the confluence of segregation in housing and the tradition of the neighborhood school. In his recommendations on this subject, the superintendent as an educational leader inevitably and properly helps to decide with what races and cultures a given child will associate. Even if only for this reason, his influence extends beyond the purely scholastic to the social. But the problem is so intertwined with public policy, agency objectives, and private practices in other areas, such as welfare, public health, and housing, that the superintendent would

be derelict in his duties if he limited his influence to school policy. A competent superintendent, operating at his best, can do much more for his community. He possesses the knowledge, the prestige, and the contacts to influence the actions of governments, organizations, and industries in directions beneficial to the development of the innate capacities of all citizens.

The size of the administrative unit is more important than ever. School districts too large for the teacher to relate to the central office should be decentralized. School districts with too few pupils for an adequate program at reasonable cost should consolidate or establish an intermediate unit. School administration is necessarily centralized, but teaching, which focuses on the individual pupil in the classroom, is just as necessarily decentralized. How centralization and decentralization can be reconciled is therefore a universal problem in school administration, and the matter is strongly influenced by the size of the territory and population encompassed in the school district. If the district is too large—in area, in numbers of pupils and teachers, or in both—the teacher may find it impossible to influence decisions being taken in the central office. Yet the major business of the central office is precisely to be sensitive to and aware of the needs of the teacher. Such districts should either be decentralized in important ways or broken up. On the other hand, school districts can be found where sparsity of population or other factors make it impossible to provide a varied program except at prohibitive cost. In such districts there should be a centralization through consolidation with neighboring districts or establishment of an intermediate administrative unit. In other words, current trends to decentralize administrative authority in some types of large districts and to centralize authority in some types of small districts should be accelerated.

No specific district size is optimal nationwide. The important thing is that past and present arrangements must nowhere

be considered sacred. Every school district should look at its size with a view not to defending tradition or protecting positions but to providing the best education for every pupil.

Every school system should have adequate staff for research and experimentation, the financial ability to secure the help of outside consultants, or a combination of the two. Furthermore, the entire professional staff should be encouraged to participate in research and experimentation. Effective leadership depends in part on possession of the pertinent facts. A considerable amount of the needed knowledge can be found in publications and can be based on evidence accumulated elsewhere. But good research and experimentation, specifically relevant to local conditions, are of constant value to teachers, supervisors, and principals. They are also vital to the superintendent's short- and long-range recommendations. All too commonly the superintendent is called upon to make a quick decision upon a complex matter regarding which little knowledge has been developed. Sound decisions require local educational knowledge. Provision of adequate resources for this purpose should be made.

An adequate administrative staff also is necessary in any school system. Given the complexity of a modern school system, no man, except in the smallest district, can personally attend to all its administrative details. Nor can he have the knowledge in all areas that that administration requires. For these reasons, and because the superintendent needs time to exercise general direction and supervision of the school system, he must have the assistance of specialists of high competence.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

The wise community demands and encourages educational leadership and recognizes the wide range of expectations confronting a superintendent of schools. The schools must be responsive to

the wishes of the people. At the same time, they must benefit from strong professional leadership. To harmonize these sometimes conflicting requirements is a permanent ordeal of democracy. It is the ability to harmonize them that distinguishes the wise community from the mob. The wise community demands leadership and can keep it. There, changes are likely to be for the better, for they are worked out in a climate of reasonable debate. On the other hand, a community in which apathy, ignorance, selfish obstructionism, or passion prevails either is suffering from lack of effective leadership or makes effective leadership impossible.

If a community judges its superintendent to be inept, weak, dictatorial, or smug, it should replace him. If the staff judges him to be a barrier rather than a contributor to educational improvement, that judgment all but negates any effectiveness he may have, and the community should replace him. But leadership often requires the taking of a stand on issues in controversy, and the superintendent should not be punished or harassed for doing so, unless there is reason to believe that he was motivated by something other than the best interests of the pupils and the public. Particularly when controversy deeply divides a community, the public must encourage leadership and must not confuse leadership with incompetence or ill will. Otherwise, the difficulties of leadership may become prohibitive, good leadership will be driven out, and the quality of education will be the chief victim.

As part of this duty of reasonableness, the community must recognize the wide range of expectations confronting a superintendent. The school board, or a faction within it, expects him to be its agent. Consideration of teachers' views is his wish and his duty. One group of citizens expects him to work to keep taxes low while another sees him as the key to the investment of more nearly adequate funds in education. The expectations held by

any one group of citizens may be poorly defined, or they may change quickly and substantially. At times reconciliation of the various views is impossible or in the superintendent's opinion undesirable. He must then take or recommend action that will risk a storm of protest.

As stated above, the board of education is legally the body which sets policy, but it does so on important issues only after extended study and discussion. In this study, it should expect and encourage the superintendent to be deeply involved, however controversial the issue. While expecting him to administer schools in accord with established policy, the board must also encourage him to evaluate that policy. Above all, it should recognize that men can differ in viewpoint and yet work together to find solutions to problems. It must expect the superintendent to have a strong professional commitment and to be the spokesman for the entire professional team as well as the agent of the board. It should assure him of support in the free, responsible exploration of ideas, in the initiation and evaluation of experimental programs, and in research. Aware of the complexity and difficulty of the problems of his position, it must recognize that the making of a mistake need not destroy the usefulness of the administrator. Inefficiency and ineptitude obviously cannot be tolerated, but a person with large responsibilities needs support in his efforts if he is to be expected to lead courageously. A free, frank examination by the board and the superintendent of problems that may arise between them should be undertaken before personality conflicts have pushed relationships beyond the point of reason. The superintendent and the board with mutual confidence and respect constitute a powerful team.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHING STAFF

Teachers should play a major role in initiating and formulating administrative and policy decisions. In the interest of the

advancement of education, the staff should seek such a role and the superintendent should welcome it. Most school policies and administrative plans are successful only insofar as they foster improved interaction between teacher and pupil, for classroom instruction is the most important function of the school. Policy making and administrative direction which ignore the professional knowledge of teachers and their knowledge of their specific situations are likely to result in poor policies and poor directives. Decisions should therefore reflect the pooled intelligence of the professional staff. In the interests of education this is a necessity, not a mere matter of professional courtesy.

Moreover, teachers are entitled to the knowledge that they are being consulted and are in contact with the central management of the school system. A system in which the teachers feel alienated from the central policy-making mechanisms is one in which the quality of instruction suffers. The good superintendent devotes time, energy, and leadership to the maintenance of high morale by working cooperatively with the teaching staff and helping them to achieve an influence commensurate with the respect due their calling.

THE QUALITIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

The superintendent must first of all be dedicated to the belief that the finest ideals of American life depend on the schools for their realization. He must be determined that, through the schools, the potentials born in people will develop rather than wither and die. He must be determined that, through the schools, this promise of development will be real for every child, whatever his background.

The superintendent must have the temperament of a leader. He must be humble enough to seek out assistance and advice wherever they can be found, confident enough to prefer working

with his staff to dictating to it, inspiring enough to bring out the best in his community and in those with whom he works, courageous enough to resist pressures which if accepted would harm the program, wise enough to direct this complex enterprise toward a vision of the future. The superintendent must possess the skill in human relations to stimulate consensus and action. He must know his ever-changing community well enough to keep the schools in tune with its varied and often conflicting desires. He must be enough a leader of men to align his community's desires with the needs of the times.

The superintendent must be a person of considerable knowledge. Much of that knowledge is specific to education and educational administration and can be derived initially from technical courses specifically designed for the preparation of superintendents. In this category is a knowledge of management techniques and of pertinent laws, regulations, and policies. But this is only part of the preparation. Because of the range of competencies required in the superintendency, preparation for that office calls for much more. The professional performance of a superintendent is directly affected by the degree to which he possesses understanding of his society and culture and of the forces affecting them. Only a student of the world can sense what the future is likely to require of young people. Only a man who is at home in the world of ideas can meet the complex responsibilities of educational leadership.

Therefore, while the superintendent can benefit greatly from the graduate programs in educational administration which have been developed in various colleges and universities, he must also possess a thirst for learning throughout his professional career. In his search for ways to improve his school system and solve its problems, he must also seek throughout his career to benefit from the thinking of his colleagues. Much of this learning will be part of his daily life. But it is essential also that school boards

give their superintendents time for study and travel and for association with their colleagues in other areas.

The superintendent should expect to be involved in controversy. He is prominently involved in an enterprise which deeply affects people's children, values, beliefs, and pocketbooks. He should know that he will not be able fully to satisfy all the people all the time. He should be prepared to make choices in which lack of money will be a determining factor, and he should be engaged in a constant battle to improve the schools' financial strength.

Conclusion

If there are few jobs in American society more difficult than the superintendency, there are also few which offer an opportunity for more significant achievement. A competent superintendent, in a community which approaches education with the social well-being in mind, can therefore enjoy the challenges of his work.

For the superintendent as for the teacher, the exhilaration of his work is in the constant pursuit of a vital objective—the best possible education for every pupil. He is stimulated, too, by the process of helping to hammer out school policies and budgets in the fire of conflicting community opinions and interests. He takes pleasure in helping to educate the public to the needs of education. He is grateful for the unique opportunity which his position affords for constant learning about people, about his community, and about the subjects taught in the schools. He is glad to participate in bringing about the *esprit de corps* in his professional staff, the parents of his pupils, and the pupils themselves that contributes to the quality of education and earns him the support of his constituency. Most of all, he recognizes the unique opportunity that the superintendency offers for contributing to the public welfare. He knows that his position is at least as significant for the future of man as any in the gift of the people.